

**REMARKS****Summary of the Office Action**

Claims 12-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hatano et al. (EP 0 935 123 A2) (hereinafter “Hatano”).

**Summary of the Response to the Office Action**

Applicant has amended claims 12, 13, 16 and 17.

Applicant has added new claim 18.

Claims 12-18 are pending.

**All Claims Define Allowable Subject Matter**

Claims 12-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hatano. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Applicant has amended claims 12, 13, 16 and 17 to provide a different recitation relating to Applicant’s invention. Claim 12 recites a combination including the recognition means compares the input speech command to the contents of the dictionary at the highest level and to the contents of the dictionary associated with the narrowing-down condition before comparing the input speech command to the contents of a dictionary at a level of the hierarchy that is below the highest level of the hierarchy. Support for claim 12 is provided at, for example, page 4, line 17 – page 5, line 1; page 17, line 11 – page 18, line 12; and Fig. 3, of Applicant’s specification. In the embodiment of the invention shown and described, the recognition process is applied to the contents of the dictionary at the highest level (*e.g.* category name dictionary shown in Fig. 3) and to the contents of the dictionary associated with the narrowing-down condition (*e.g.* a dictionary

of hospitals and a dictionary of accommodations shown in Fig. 3) before the recognition process is applied to the contents of a dictionary at a level of the hierarchy that is below the highest level of the hierarchy (*e.g.* hospital subcategory name dictionary shown in Fig. 3).

If a user sets a narrowing-down condition as a category and an institutional name frequently used by a user beforehand, a target institutional name that is matched with the narrowing-down condition can be retrieved by one vocalization without the troublesome processing associated with a hierarchical structure that is sequentially followed. As a narrowing-down condition dictionary is also simultaneously an object of recognition, even an institutional name which is not matched with the narrowing-down condition set beforehand can be retrieved according to a conventional type procedure wherein the hierarchical structure is sequentially followed.

Fig. 2A of Hatano illustrates the data structure of a request message. Fig. 2B of Hatano illustrates the data structure of recognition words. Referring to paragraph 0089 and Fig. 4, Hatano describes that first hierarchy 40 illustrated in Fig. 2B is used for the recognition process at S10, and then second hierarchy 41, third hierarchy 42, fourth hierarchy 43, and fifth hierarchy 44 illustrated in Fig. 2B are used. Applicant submits that Hatano does not disclose that first hierarchy 40, and the contents of a dictionary associated with a narrowing-down condition preset by a user, are used for a recognition process before second hierarchy 41, third hierarchy 42, fourth hierarchy 43, and fifth hierarchy 44 in Fig. 2B are used. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that Hatano does not teach or suggest the claimed combination comprising “the recognition means compares the input speech command to the contents of the dictionary at the highest level and to the contents of the dictionary associated with the narrowing-down condition

before comparing the input speech command to the contents of a dictionary at a level of the hierarchy that is below the highest level of the hierarchy” as recited in claim 12.

Claims 13-15 and 18 depend from claim 12 and recite the same combination of allowable features recited in claim 12, as well as additional features that define over the prior art. For example, claim 18 recites that the narrowing-down condition is a category. As described at paragraphs 0038 and 0039 of Hatano, place names or facility names that are frequently set as a destination spot may be selected and registered, in advance, in the RAM 8. In addition, place names or facility names which have been retrieved recently and set as a destination spot may be stored in RAM 8. However, Applicant respectfully submits that Hatano does not show that the narrowing-down condition is a category, as recited in claim 18.

Claim 16 recites a method comprising recognizing an input speech command by using the contents of the dictionary at the highest level and the contents of the dictionary associated with the narrowing-down condition before using the contents of a dictionary at a level of the hierarchy that is below the highest level of the hierarchy. Claim 17 recites a combination comprising a recognizer which recognizes an input speech command by using the contents of the dictionary at the highest level and the contents of the dictionary associated with the narrowing-down condition before using the contents of a dictionary at a level of the hierarchy that is below the highest level of the hierarchy. For the reasons described above with respect to claim 12, Applicant submits that Hatano does not teach or suggest these features.

Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), of claims 12-17, be withdrawn, and that the pending claims be allowed.

**CONCLUSION**

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the pending claims are in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests reconsideration and timely allowance of the pending claims. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative to expedite prosecution. A favorable action is awaited.

**EXCEPT** for issue fees payable under 37 C.F.R. § 1.18, the Commissioner is hereby authorized by this paper to charge any additional fees during the entire pendency of this application including fees due under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 and 1.17 which may be required, including any required extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0573. This paragraph is intended to be a **CONSTRUCTIVE PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME** in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a)(3).

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: August 23, 2006

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